

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 01166 131703Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03
LAB-04 SIL-01 IO-13 OMB-01 PA-01 /070 W
-----125928 141537Z /72 42

R 131640Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2299
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONGEN MONTREAL
AMCONGEN TORONTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 1166

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, ELAB, TD
SUBJECT: NO PROGRESS IN BWIA DISPUTE

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 828 AND PREVIOUS

BEGIN LOU. DEPISTE NUMEROUS PLEAS FROM LOCAL BUSINESS,
PRESS AND PUBLIC THAT THE GOTT TAKE STEPS TO RESOLVE, OR
AT LEAST EXPLAIN ITS POSITION AND POLICY IN, THE TEN-WEEK-OLD
BWIA DISPUTE, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE ACTIVITY AND NO PROGRESS
IN PERIOD SINCE REFTEL. ALTHOUGH SPECIFIC ISSUES ARISING
OUT OF THE STRIKE ARE SCHEDULED TO BE HEARD IN THE INDUSTRIAL
COURT OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, COURT PROCEEDINGS COULD DRAG
ON FOR MONTHS. IN ANY EVENT, RESOLUTION OF THE IMPASSE WOULD
HAVE TO RESULT FROM POLITICAL DECISIONS RATHER THAN
COURT ACTIONS.

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2. IN RECENT WEEKS THERE HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT RUMORS
OF AN IMPENDING IFALPA BOYCOTT OF LIMITED DURATION OF
T&T, BUT NONE HAS MATERIALIZED YET. INTE BWIA PILOTS,
HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY HAVE ASKED IFALPA FOR FINANCIAL
AND OTHER ASSISTANCE, AND ARE PLANNING TO PUT THEIR
CASE TO THE IFALPA ANNUAL MEETING IN FRANKFURT, APRIL 13-18.
END LOU.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. A SOURCE CLOSE TO PM WILLIAMS WHO IS SERVING ON THE TEN-MAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY GOVERNMENT TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF T&T'S AIR SERVICES, HAS TOLD US THAT THE COMMITTEE WILL URGE THAT GOTT TAKE POSITIVE ACTION TO GET BWIA FLYING AGAIN SOON. THIS WOULD REQUIRE COMPROMISES BY BOTH THE COMPANY AND PILOTS, BUT THE SOURCE WAS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT WILLIAMS WAS EITHER "CAPABLE OR WILLING" TO TAKE THE STEPS NECESSARY TO SAVE THE AIRLINE. HAVING LOOKED CAREFULLY AT THE COMPANY, THE SOURCE BELIEVED THAT IF THE PLANES WERE NOT BACK IN THE AIR WITHIN 90 DAYS, BWIA WOULD PROBABLY FOLD UP COMPLETELY.

4. COMMENT. THE BWIA DISPUTE HAS SHOWN ERIC WILLIAMS AT HIS MOST INTRACTABLE. THAT THE AIRLINE HAD SERIOUS MANAGERIAL, LABOR AND OTHER PROBLEMS EVEN BEFORE THE CURRENT STRIKE IS NOT AT QUESTION. NEVERTHELESS, THE PM'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO LET BWIA PILE UP EVER-INCREASING LOSSES, WHILE HUNDREDS OF THE COMPANY'S WORKERS REMAIN IDLE AND MANY BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO DEPEND ON THE AIRLINE SUFFER, APPEARS UNREASONABLE AT BEST AND IRRATIONAL AT WORST. THE CURRENT SITUATION CAN PERHAPS BE SUMMED UP BEST BY A SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT'S RECENT COMMENT ON THE PILOTS' DECISION TO STRIKE, THAT
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IF YOU ARE GOING TO COMPETE WITH SOMEONE TO SEE WHO CAN HOLD HIS BREATH LONGEST UNDER WATER, "YOU HAD BETTER BE SURE FIRST THAT THE OTHER PERSON ISN'T SUICIDAL."
END CONFIDENTIAL.
FOX

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, AIRCRAFT PILOTS, LABOR STRIKES, COURT PROCEEDINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PORTO01166
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780161-0062
Format: TEL
From: PORT OF SPAIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780459/aaaabxsu.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 855da1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 PORT OF SPAIN 828
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2973490
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NO PROGRESS IN BWIA DISPUTE
TAGS: EAIR, ELAB, TD, BWIA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/855da1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014